

From: mws@are4s.com [mailto:mws@are4s.com]
Sent: Thursday, November 03, 2005 5:44 PM
To: ATR-Real Estate Workshop
Subject: Competition in real estate

To Whom It May Concern,

I have been selling real estate full time for nearly 20 years in one area/market. To think that consumers don't have a choice of who they may use to represent them in a real estate transaction is absurd. To that end, many consumers feel they can adequately represent themselves without the full benefit of an agent or broker. Those consumers simply find a broker who will put their property into the MLS, maybe give them some yard signs, pay a minimal fee, and take care of their business.

The MLS is a cooperative, broker-to-broker offer of cooperation and compensation that help both brokers and customers buy and sell homes. It is not a public utility, nor should it be. The beauty of the MLS is that it allows real estate brokerages of every size to compete on a level playing field. It gives all of us access to an inventory of property listings that we are able to show and sell to our clients.

The MLS doesn't discriminate. All MLS members are treated equally, regardless of their size or their business model, and yet the rights of property owners and their listing brokers are respected. The rules of the MLS achieve a delicate balance between respecting the rights of listing brokers so they will continue to be willing to contribute their inventory of listings and permitting cooperating brokers the ability to show those listings and be assured of receiving compensation if they bring about a successful sale.

From my perspective, the new ILD policy is a win-win for consumers and REALTORSR. It works for consumers because it gives home sellers a choice whether to permit marketing of their property on the Internet and in selecting an MLS member with whom they want to work. It allows them to "opt-in" and have their property displayed on other brokers' Web sites even if they are working with a broker who does not participate in sharing his listings for display by his competitors. And it works for REALTORSR because it gives us the right to control where our listings are displayed on the Internet.

The huge influx of new agents into the business means even greater competition. Commissions, marketing techniques, and experience levels are being questioned by consumers. Those with the highest business ethics, strongest work ethics, and the most experience are having to compete on many levels with many different brokerage business models. And the consumer wins because of the extensive choices. Frankly, my direct experience with unsupervised new agents has meant that in many instances I am providing the expertise required to close transactions. Even the new agents win on that. But, the market is changing and soon the "it's-going-to-be-so-easy-newbies" will disappear because they will not be able to support themselves without solid foundations, and they will find themselves involved in litigation.

Competition? It's here now.

Marilyn Schumacher
Broker Associate
CRS, SRES, e-PRO

Harbor Bay Realty
mws@are4s.com
www.alamedarealestate4sale.com
510-814-4709 direct
510-523-1144 reception
510-523-3652 fax
885 Island Drive Suite 200
Alameda, CA 94502